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COMMISSION ON NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS.

COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY,
U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Wednesday, January 5, 1910.

The committee met this day at 10 o'clock a. m., Hon. Samuel W. McCall (chairman), presiding.

The following persons appeared and were heard in behalf of the bill (H. R. 15428) authorizing the President to appoint a commission on national historical publications:

Dr. J. Franklin Jameson, director of the department of historical research in the Carnegie Institution of Washington; Dr. H. T. Colenbrander, of The Hague, secretary of the Dutch Commission on National Historical Publications; Charles Francis Adams, esq., president of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.; Rear-Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, U. S. Navy, retired; Prof. Charles M. Andrews, of the Johns Hopkins University; Mr. Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress; and Miss Ruth Putnam, specialist in Dutch history, Washington, D. C.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. Mr. Rideout, will you please read the bill?

Mr. M. E. RIDEOUT, Jr., clerk (reads):

A BILL Authorizing the President to appoint a Commission on National Historical Publications.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President be authorized to appoint, with the advice and consent of the Senate, nine persons of the highest standing for scholarship and judgment in the field of United States history, to serve as a Commission on National Historical Publications, and to have authority to defray, out of such appropriations as Congress may from time to time make to said commission, the cost of preparing and printing at the Government Printing Office such volumes of material for American history as it may deem most useful.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, Doctor Jameson, will you call these gentlemen in whatever order you prefer? Or, begin yourself; just as you desire.

Doctor JAMESON. I had not framed any notion as to that, Mr. Chairman.

STATEMENT OF DR. J. FRANKLIN JAMESON, DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTION, OF WASHINGTON, D. C.

The CHAIRMAN. Perhaps, Doctor Jameson, you might just give a comprehensive statement of the proposition, and then we will hear from the other gentlemen. First, give your name to the stenographer.

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Doctor JAMESON. J. Franklin Jameson, of the Carnegie Institution.

The CHAIRMAN. You are secretary of the Carnegie Institution?

Doctor JAMESON. No, sir; I am director of the department of historical research of the Carnegie Institution.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, proceed, Doctor Jameson, and give your views of this proposition.

Doctor JAMESON. I was secretary of the commission which prepared a report submitted to the Committee on Department Methods with respect to this.

The CHAIRMAN. Of what organization was that?

Doctor JAMESON. That was a committee appointed by the President; by the late President——

The CHAIRMAN. By the President of the United States?

Doctor JAMESON. Yes; by the President of the United States, to serve as an assistant committee to the Committee on Department Methods, and to report upon the specific matter of the government historical publications, and as to a mode by which substantially the Government, through having a better system, might get a better product for such appropriations as it made towards historical documentary publications.

The theory upon which that commission went to work was that while the Government of the United States had expended a large amount—a very large amount of money in some years—for historical publications, and while in all probability it would, like other governments, continue to spend money for historical publications, the want of a systematic method of approach to the problem had prevented the Government and the nation from getting full value for the expenditure made. The origin of the documentary historical publications which have been put forth by the Government has been casual. Volumes or series have been suggested by individual departments or by subordinates in individual departments, by individual committees or clerks of committees in Congress, and so they come forward without a broad consideration of the whole field, without any systematic endeavor to discover what are the best things that the Government might publish for the promotion of historical scholarship in the country. Some of the things that have been published have been very excellent; some have not been. Some have been highly advisable, things which every historical scholar and which the intelligent public would wish to have, and others have been things which have been of comparatively slight importance and value. It was thought by the President that the commission which he then named might, by going over the whole field and considering it in all its aspects, from the point of view of historical production and from the point of view of historians, provide a better system for dealing with the whole matter. So this commission canvassed all the different parts and aspects of American history; pointed out where a great deal of work had already been done, and where, on the other hand, gaps existed; attempted, in other words, to show how, by supplementing the vast body of historical publications which the Government has brought out, the thing might be rounded out into a system and those things published which most need to be published.

This material deals chiefly with documentary publications, the supposition being that the Government would not publish histories,

but would publish materials for histories; and therefore the question what sort of materials would best serve the interests of historians and best be worked up by private endeavor subsequently and subserve the interests of the next generation was the question that was chiefly before us. We made a report upon that, which was approved by the committee on department methods and transmitted to the President, and by him transmitted to Congress in February last, a little while before the end of the session.

That report exists in the form of a quarto pamphlet, in the form made out by the committee on department methods.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you happen to have any extra copies of it?

Doctor JAMESON. Yes, sir. I have several here, which are at the service of the committee if desired. It also exists in this form: "A message from the President of the United States transmitting," and so forth; a Senate document—Senate Document No. 714 of the Sixtieth Congress, second session.

Now, after such a preliminary survey of the field and of the needs, and of the gaps and the means of filling those gaps, and after describing the practice which has been followed by other governments in this matter, chiefly the practice of having an expert commission to deal with the thing in a continuous and orderly manner, the commission proceeded at the end of this report to recommend a system of that sort for our Government, a system whereby a commission, independent of departments and composed of persons versed in history and of good judgment in historical matters, should hereafter propose plans and supervise the execution of plans for the historical publications of the Government—that is, that hereafter a systematic endeavor shall be made to meet the needs of historians and of the readers of the future by providing such volumes of documents as are most needed, and by seeing that they are well executed. This we have conceived to be not only a measure for improving the product, but an economical measure, a measure which would save the Government money.

Assuming that the Government was to spend considerable sums of money for historical publications in the future, as it has in the past, it would be the means of seeing to it that the Government got the worth of its money by having what was needed, rather than what was not needed; what was planned for deliberately, rather than what was of casual origin; and having what was executed done well and in accordance with a systematic plan and scientific control. This report ended with a bill which gives the simple outlines of such a commission. That bill, slightly modified, is the bill which is here before the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Doctor, can you tell us briefly what the other governments have done in this matter?

Doctor JAMESON. Well, some of them began with modes of operation as casual as the United States has hitherto pursued, but nearly all of them now have commissions of about this sort: commissions of historical experts which plan and execute volumes of historical documents which they suppose to be of the most importance and value to the public; commissions which plan them and supervise their execution. That is substantially the system in every important country except England, and in England it prevails with respect

to one part of their historical output, namely, the publications in the control of what is called the "historical manuscripts commission," although they are still going on with the older series not supervised by such a commission, but supervised by the master of rolls, who, although an equity judge, is the head of the archives service.

The CHAIRMAN. Can you give the committee a notion of the comparative expenditures in the past of the Government of the United States and the foreign governments in connection with historical publications?

Doctor JAMESON. The systems differ so much that to make exact comparisons probably is not possible. About fifteen years ago I prepared with some care a paper for the American Historical Association upon that subject—the expenditures of foreign governments in behalf of history—and the data there given are probably substantially true at the present time. It appears from this table (p. 7) in this report of our committee that the United States Government has on the average expended in printing documentary texts, calendars of manuscripts, and other historical volumes \$159,000 per annum since the year 1890. Now, I do not think the figures are given for other countries; yes——

The CHAIRMAN. I have an impression that we have been expending more than other governments.

Doctor JAMESON. Yes. I can answer the question best, so far as other countries are concerned, by reading from page 36 of this report:

Some years ago, when a systematic attempt was made to obtain figures for the comparison, they were spending considerably less. Great Britain was then spending about \$75,000 per annum for the preparation and printing of documentary historical volumes: Russia about \$50,000; France about \$30,000; Germany and Prussia, for preparation alone, not prints, about \$23,000; while the United States, then at the height of its expenditure for the official records of the war, was spending in such ways more than \$250,000.

The United States was then at the height of its expenditure and was spending \$250,000 per annum, but on the average of the last twenty years it has been about \$150,000, while the average of other countries, I think, has not much changed from what it was computed to be in 1890. We have spent much more money than they have, therefore.

The CHAIRMAN. Have you a pretty good notion of the character of the material which other governments have been printing, so that you can express an opinion of the comparative results—whether they are getting as much for their less expenditure as we are getting for our greater expenditure?

Doctor JAMESON. Yes; I think I know them pretty intimately, and it is quite certain that they are getting more for their money. The quality of their historical publications is distinctly higher. On the other hand, of course, in saying that they are getting more for their money it must be remembered that the cost of such things, the cost of learned labor, is less in Europe than in America, as in many other things.

The CHAIRMAN. You do not think the tariff has anything to do with that, I suppose?

Doctor JAMESON. I do not see how it can have. But the reason why the quality of their work is higher is mainly the fact that a better system is followed and better talent is selected and employed.

The CHAIRMAN. My colleague, Mr. Burke, suggests, Doctor Jameson, to ask you whether you have considered the question of what the expenditure would be under this bill—the probable expenditure.

Doctor JAMESON. Exactly what Congress may choose to appropriate.

The CHAIRMAN. But what would be necessary to give the results that are really desirable? Have you considered that question? Of course, if you have not considered it you will not address yourself to it.

Doctor JAMESON. This commission spoken of in the bill could do extremely useful things for the Government and for the historical public upon appropriations of so small a matter as \$25,000. But after about \$10,000 or something of that sort is expended annually in maintenance, all in excess would be simply an increase in the number of excellent volumes of historical matter which could be brought out per annum. That is why I spoke indefinitely when you first asked the question. It is a commission of which I suppose in any case the running expenses would not be great. The most of a sum so small as \$25,000 would be spent in the production of volumes, and the more dollars appropriated—the larger the appropriation—the more volumes per annum.

Now, in this survey by our committee of the needs of the Government and of the public with respect to historical publications (pp. 9-34 of the report) a great many things are laid out. There is a very extensive programme which ought in the future to be carried through. But whether it should be carried through at a rapid rate or at a slow rate would depend upon the size of the appropriations. There is nothing in the scheme which calls for any definite portion of that programme to be executed at any definite time. It would be a mistake to attempt to execute it rapidly. It is not possible to cause that whole programme to be carried out with good quality in a short time. Rapid execution would be bad execution.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it your idea that the commission should have a salary?

Doctor JAMESON. The report of our committee in the scheme which is set forth here on page 40 provided for a compensation to the members of the commission, and that, I think, would be advisable. It would be impossible for such a commission to carry out its work without coming to Washington and holding meetings two or three times a year. It would be impossible to have the country adequately represented unless men who are remote from this place as well as men who are near it—men in the Far West and West as well as in the East—should be appointed, that all historical interests of the country should be represented. That would mean also an appropriation for traveling expenses of the members in coming to such meetings. I suppose if it were to do anything large the commission would have to have a secretary and some small office force, but the bulk of the appropriation would inevitably be spent in preparing and printing such volumes as might be expedient, with a rapidity proportionate to the appropriation of the year. One hundred and fifty thousand dollars, which is the average of the last twenty years, would be altogether too much for any such commission to start out with. If such a commission were established, I suppose it would be inex-

pedient for them to start otherwise than with a considerably less appropriation than that. After they get under headway I think it might be found possible to spend that much; but I should not think so, because quality would be more important than quantity in such a service.

The CHAIRMAN. Will you indicate the character of the things which probably the commission would deem best to print, in a general way?

Doctor JAMESON. They are named here in the middle of page 34; several things selected from all the recommendations which had occurred to them, to which they would give the foremost place. For instance, on the military side, it is obvious from the situation of things at the War Department that the thing most expedient to be dealt with first would be the official records of the war with Mexico. Those are in a state to be published. Of things at the Library of Congress, any one would say, I should suppose—I know we have a better authority here than mine about that—but I believe it is generally considered that after the journals and papers of the Continental Congress the papers of Andrew Jackson are the most needful to be published of the materials there.

In the colonial period we have rather more need of a series of commissions and instructions to the governors of the colonies than of any other one thing toward the elucidation of the history of the colonial period; but I should say that the one great recommendation which the committee made in this report was that a series continuing the old American State Papers, but adapted to modern conditions and adapted to the materials of the last seventy years, should be generated. That whole series of American State Papers in folio was an extraordinary production for a young nation to have carried through, and is invaluable to all historical students of the period from 1789 to 1828. But from the year 1828 the series could be given a greater expansion on the economic line, but substantially along the lines of the American State Papers. A continuance of that, under such a title as National State Papers, ought to be undertaken. Most of the recommendations which the committee made could be summed up as portions of a series of national state papers, subdivided very much as the old American State Papers were. That would be, in the judgment of the committee, the most important single undertaking that the future commission could take up.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there anything else you desire to say, doctor?

Doctor JAMESON. I do not think so.

Mr. BURKE. Doctor, does this bill contemplate the creation of a permanent commission—that is, to serve indefinitely?

Doctor JAMESON. I understand so; and I should think that would be expedient. A steady policy framed by a relatively permanent commission would, I should think, give the best product.

Mr. BURKE. Why is it necessary to have a commission consisting of so many as nine?

Doctor JAMESON. Perhaps it is not necessary, but in the operations which the committee proposes they thought of nine as a number that would enable different aspects of history, different interests in history, different parts of the country, to be represented, and they wished to have a commission the scope of which and the interests of which should be broad. They also thought that in any relations

with the departments there should be some such scheme—although that would not be developed in the act—as that which is set forth here on page 40, whereby subcommittees of three should be appointed by the commission to act with subcommittees of three to be appointed by the individual departments. Of course, hitherto most of the historical publications have been the offspring of particular departments, and this commission would need to exercise, with regard to them, discretion and tact in an advisory way, which would best work out, we thought, if subcommittees of an equal number, representing on the one hand the departments and on the other hand this commission, should try to get together in such a way that no publication should be issued which had not the approval of a representative subcommittee of this commission on the one hand and of a representative committee of the department on the other hand. That is not a detail to be put into the act, I dare say, but, at any rate, it would be a useful mode of operation, and calls for a little larger commission than four or five or six.

Mr. BURKE. What does the report indicate as to compensation, the amount to be paid?

Doctor JAMESON. Nothing is intimated as to that, except that it is intimated that it would be appropriate that there should be some small compensation, because the members of the commission, if they are fit men to deal with such problems as these, are men who already have their occupations, and would devote to this as much time as they could in coming here to meetings and in dealing at home with the reports submitted to them or documents transmitted to them by their chairman and secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. And the Government would really get the benefit of what they are doing in their private avocations; for instance, if it be pursuing some branch of history in some university, that would be their regular work?

Doctor JAMESON. They would usually be of that class. If the Government wished to have the best historical talent for such a commission, the wisest and most competent to advise in this matter, it must seek them where they are, and generally they are occupied with university work, from which they get their livelihood and from which they could not be wholly diverted, but from which they could divert part of the time to a work like this.

The CHAIRMAN. And historical scholars outside of the regular universities?

Doctor JAMESON. Yes. But that is not so large a class as those who are occupied with university work in this country.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, Doctor, would you be good enough to indicate the order in which you would like to have the committee hear the various gentlemen? Perhaps it would be well to hear the secretary of the Dutch Commission on National Historical Publications.

Doctor JAMESON. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. We will hear Doctor Colenbrander.

STATEMENT OF DR. H. T. COLENBRANDER, OF THE HAGUE, SECRETARY OF THE DUTCH COMMISSION ON NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS.

The CHAIRMAN. Doctor, the committee would be very glad to hear you, and would like to hear especially of such an organization as the Dutch commission, and how they do things in Holland.

Doctor COLENBRANDER. In Holland a few years ago the whole matter was left to private enterprise, private societies. Of course, a good number of publications were made through subsidies by the State, and people went for the subsidies to that department of the State which was subservient to the subject. So a number of publications have been paid for by the war department, others being subsidized by the department of the interior, and others being subsidized by the marine department. The result of it was that people who were best aware of the matter had the idea that the Government was spending money on certain parts of a system which it would better take in hand itself and devote attention to it itself and have the work done by the best talent in the country. That idea became general. It was only a question whether they would give a grant to the existing National Historical Society or appoint a committee themselves. They resorted to the last line of action, and appointed a committee of ten persons, to meet once a year, and as often otherwise as they deemed necessary, in the central department of archives at The Hague, and vested the presidency in the general archivist of the Kingdom, one of the archivists acting as secretary.

The commission was to consist of 10 members, for the most part university professors, and some of them archivists and private historical scholars of a high standing. The first work this commission resolved to undertake was to make a general survey of all the matters they knew would be of use for the study of national history, and, on the other hand, of all existing publications, so they made a comparison between what existed and what might be claimed or represented to be necessary for the proper study of history; and so they came to the result of pointing out a certain number of gaps to be filled up by new publications.

This report was presented to the minister of the interior, and with his leave it was printed and offered to the historical societies and historical scholars, to make them aware of what the commission was about. Then a certain sum was granted on the budget of the ministry of the interior for the free use of the commission. The sum has been raised from time to time as it proved that it was not enough to do all that the committee wanted to be done.

In comparison with the sums I have heard mentioned here this morning, of course the sums granted there are very small; in the first place, on account of the greater cheapness of labor of all kinds in Holland, and, secondly, the object in itself is smaller, according to the smallness of the country. The general opinion, I may fairly state, is that the system has worked well, and that it is of use in bringing forth especially such publications as are too difficult and too vast to be procured or to be published by private scholars in their leisure hours, because really there do not exist many private scholars who have their full time to give to such a thing. Most of their time is

taken up by other work, by university work, or work of quite another kind in connection with their living, so that the experience which we have had is that it is not enough to give a certain sum and appoint a committee to spend that sum, but it is also necessary to have a certain staff of people who are available for doing that work. And so a second step we are now going to take is to appoint on a small scale, which may be expanded after a few years, a certain number of people who will be considered as government officials, to be intrusted with such government publications, which of course does not exclude the idea of other scholars being interested in the work, but it is to give assurance that such publications as may not appeal to private scholars, and which may be deemed probably the most necessary by the committee and the most proper to be procured or published by the state, will find always somebody on hand to be put in charge of it.

The CHAIRMAN. Can you give the committee some illustration of the works that you have printed, or that have been printed through the action of the commission in Holland?

Doctor COLENBRANDER. Yes. For instance, one of the first things the committee did was to undertake a large publication of documents to connect the history of the old Dutch Republic, which till then had largely fixed the attention of scholars, to the history of modern times. So a large publication has been undertaken of the revolutionary period, beginning in 1795. The seven volumes that have appeared bring the history down to the year 1806. This publication is to be continued until the year 1840.

Another thing is the publication of materials for the history of Dutch trade. A great number of serials have been projected, two of which are now in preparation, one dealing with Baltic trade from its beginning to the end of the eighteenth century, and one with the Mediterranean trade and the Levant trade in the same period. One of the publications deals with the history of the cloth-making industry in the city of Leyden, as an instance of the development of an industrial center from the Middle Ages down to the present time. One of the publications is to deal with the history of the Amsterdam exchange and the Amsterdam banks.

The CHAIRMAN. It would be a document that would be very valuable in America just now.

Doctor COLENBRANDER. Other publications are intended to fill up gaps left by existing publications, which have been stopped before they were finished, because the publisher died or because the society had no more money to spend upon them, or for some reason like that. One of the things the state proposes to do is to provide for missing parts of publications, which have been undertaken in former times by somebody else, and it is intended that it shall be the central historical agency of the country. The division of labor between the state agency and the foremost historical societies is, mostly this, that the historical societies confine themselves more and more to publishing materials of a short character which form an entity in themselves, while the state agency confines itself chiefly to the publication of long series of homogenous documents, which are properly left to the state, because they are more costly and because the state can better secure regularity of the product.

The CHAIRMAN. Have you anything further to offer, Doctor?

Doctor COLLENBRANDER. I thank you, no, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee is under great obligation to you for your very illuminating statement about the custom of your country.

Now, Doctor Jameson, who will you suggest?

Doctor JAMESON. I would suggest Mr. Adams.

STATEMENT OF CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, ESQ., PRESIDENT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BOSTON, MASS.

The CHAIRMAN. Technically, I suppose it is Mr. Adams, of Lincoln, but known outside as of Boston: perhaps better known as of Massachusetts.

Mr. ADAMS. That would do, sir.

Doctor JAMESON. I suggest that the description might be "president of the Massachusetts Historical Society."

Mr. ADAMS. Yes. In this connection that would be my proper designation, "president of the Massachusetts Historical Society."

The CHAIRMAN. Proceed.

Mr. ADAMS. I have very little to say, and the time of the committee is of great value, and in the presence of men like Mr. Jameson and Mr. Putnam I should not pretend to express any opinion in relation to the character of the publications of other nations, or as to the precedence which should be given to the national publications here. The only thing I would have to say which would be of any value to the committee would relate to this proposed commission, and that can be put in very few words.

The essential thing with respect to every commission of this sort is the secretary. Mr. Chairman, you will get a perfectly analogous case in the famous work done by Horace Mann, of Massachusetts, in connection with the public schools. He was there the secretary of the board of education, and as secretary he accomplished this work. It is just so in one of these things. I should very strongly dissent from any idea that the members of this commission should be salaried. Necessarily if they are, it is a small salary, and a small salary is a great inducement to very poor material. The one person, in my view of the matter, who should be salaried would be the secretary. The other members should serve because the appointment is considered an honorable distinction, as they do on the board of the Smithsonian Institution, for instance, as they do on the Peabody fund; that it is an honor and a compliment to be appointed; and all the compensation that they receive would be simply their expenses in attending meetings.

I should strongly advise, from my own experience, that the commission be not less than the number named in the bill, provided you do not pay them, provided it is an honorary distinction, and that the only salaried person would be the secretary, and he should be not only a recording officer, but the head of the thing, and the organizing mind connected with it. He should be a salaried person, and the salary should be sufficient to invite to it the high order of intelligence and experience and observation and education that the work requires.

Then the work would be mapped out in a leisurely way and would be gone at in an orderly way—a thing which we have never yet done

in this country. We have done an immense amount of printing, but it is all of what might be called a spasmodic character. They would print this, that, and the other thing, and when they got through with printing something or other, they would, in certain cases that I have been acquainted with, have an army of clerks, and so forth, and the object would be to keep them in position and keep them employed, and then they would print a great deal of matter which is of very slight value. If properly handled and gone at in a well-considered manner, this proposed commission would save a great deal of public money by preventing this indiscriminate printing here and there and everywhere without any head or any order, and they would gradually settle down, as has been the case with Holland, as I understand, and with other governments—they would settle down on a well-considered, systematic plan of publication, which would move along on established lines, and at the end of a few years accomplish very considerable results.

But I do think that if there is one thing in connection with everything of this sort which is pernicious it is attaching to the offices small salaries, which invite very ordinary men, which make it an object with very ordinary men, and, in the second place, having a man of inferior qualifications in the position of secretary—having a man there who is "looking for a job," as the expression is. But if this bill were reported and passed in the simple form proposed and the commission were then organized and established on the lines that I have indicated, I think that any expert in these matters would say at once that it is a most desirable thing to accomplish; and the result would be not only a reduction of the enormous amount of worthless material which is now published without any organization, but if proceeded with slowly and in a well-ordered manner, in a few years we should have what is a very great desideratum. I think that is all I have to suggest.

The CHAIRMAN. Have you anything to suggest, Mr. Burke?

Mr. BURKE. No. He has brought out the very idea I had in mind. I had in mind the idea that this commission, if it was to accomplish anything, would have to rely largely on the secretary.

Mr. ADAMS. Yes. I will give you the case of the society of which I am the head, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and that is a case exactly in point. That is the oldest historical society, I believe in the world, at any rate in America, and it is the mother or the father of all the historical societies in America. It is limited in membership by law to 100 members. Now, that society has published a great deal of very valuable matter, but as I look through its publications—perhaps now 150 volumes, I do not remember—the amount of waste that there has been there is mortifying to me. One of my efforts has been, as death-made a change possible, to get a secretary, or what we call an editor. Within a year we have got Mr. Worthington C. Ford, a very accomplished editor, and he is the one salaried man connected with the whole institution, and Mr. Ford is bringing slowly and in a mature fashion things into shape, and there is not connected with the society in any way, except in a mere subordinate capacity of assistant librarians and people of that sort, a single salaried man except Mr. Ford. All the members, if they should receive money,

would consider the system destructive and demoralizing at once. Whatever is done is done for the highest possible reasons and public considerations and as a matter of public obligation, and the introduction of salaries, I think, is simply ruinous.

Mr. BURKE. Have you any idea as to the probable expense that would be incurred under a commission such as you have in mind?

Mr. ADAMS. No, sir; I have not for the United States. I know what we have in the Massachusetts Historical Society, where we publish only perhaps a couple of volumes a year, or something of that sort. There we should be considered by you as a very moderate establishment, as our entire expenses, all the running expenses of the establishment, are not more than \$12,000 or \$18,000 a year, and that includes the building and the library and everything connected with it. But I must freely say that as to the United States Mr. Putnam and Doctor Jameson would have an idea better than I, and I should not presume to put forth my opinion in comparison with theirs, as they are so much better qualified to speak on this subject than I.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you. Now, Admiral Mahan.

**STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL ALFRED T. MAHAN, U. S. NAVY,
RETIRED.**

Admiral MAHAN. I have very little to say, Mr. Chairman, after the gentlemen who have spoken, with all their experience, because I have no experience in the matter. I presume that the Government proposes to go on with publications of this character, and the question is how they are to get the best results with the money they are to spend.

I should not have spoken of it at all, but I find myself differing so much from Mr. Adams's point of view with regard to salaries that I think I ought to speak upon the matter. So far as I now remember of the movements of the Committee on Documentary Publications, which was our name, it was I who suggested the idea of compensation. These eminent gentlemen are to do a certain amount of work for the Government, and they should be remunerated. But the case is not the same, in my apprehension, as that of a historical society in a State, which is a purely voluntary society, not employed by the State in any way, but purely a voluntary association of men who come together voluntarily, and their own interest carries on this work.

I entirely agree with Mr. Adams that the active or working man must be the secretary. More will depend upon him than upon any one member, but you will call upon these other gentlemen to do a large amount of work for the Government, which will be in a measure a large economy for the Government if they do the work conscientiously, and I always experience the conscientious pressure that is put upon me when I feel that I am being paid for the work I am doing; I feel that I must do it better than I would do voluntary work. Of course the interest in the work comes in to encourage a man already disposed to do it. That is another matter. But these gentlemen will be called away from the work in which they are immediately interested to engage in one in which they can not fail to have some interest; they will be called to meet sometimes, because as historical students they can not fail to wish to see the thing carried on to the

very best advantage. But the Government, in intending to employ a number of men, ought to give them some moderate compensation as representing the time they give and their experience in the matter, and also to exert that influence that comes to a man when he is receiving money and who expects that he must give work in return.

As regards the methods and personnel of the commission, I presume that the commission will be chosen, as the expression here is, of men of the highest standing and judgment. Of course, that is a matter of opinion, but it can be assumed that men of high standing would seek and get the appointment. We must assume that a certain amount of discretion would be used by the persons who appoint them. I think that the secretary should be adequately salaried, but beyond that I think there is nothing for me to say.

MR. BURKE. I would like to ask you if we have not a number of commissions at present, who are rendering service to the country in a similar sense with this commission, that are not salaried?

ADMIRAL MAHAN. I do not know. Of course, I might know through the press, but I do not know actually even in that way.

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Putnam, would you speak?

MR. PUTNAM. Perhaps, after Professor Andrews.

THE CHAIRMAN. Very well; Professor Andrews.

STATEMENT OF PROF. CHARLES M. ANDREWS, OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY.

THE CHAIRMAN. Professor Andrews, you are of Johns Hopkins University?

PROFESSOR ANDREWS. Yes, sir. As I see the question before us, Mr. Chairman, it is simply trying to bring the United States into conformity with other countries that have adopted a scientific method in dealing with their papers and documents and preparing them for the use of scholars and the public at large. It is rather well known—I may be here repeating what others have said—that while the Government has expended large amounts of money in the publication of its historical material, it has not always expended that money as wisely, as economically, and to the best advantage as it might have done. This commission is simply an effort to bring the country into line with those countries that have recognized the necessity of adopting scientific methods and employing experts in the handling of the documentary material at their disposal.

My particular experience happens to lie in connection with the British archives. Now, the conditions prevailing in England are in many respects quite different, of course, from those which prevail here. Nevertheless, the principle involved in all that is done in England is exactly the same principle as underlies the meaning and purport of this bill; that is, to intrust not only the publication but originally the care and preservation, and eventually the publication, of such material as is necessary to write the history of Great Britain to those who have made it a special study and have become experts in handling and dealing with the material, and who are competent by virtue of their wider knowledge to select and present the material selected to the public at large.

I do not quite see why in regard to historical materials it would not be deemed desirable to place the control of such materials in the hands of men and women who have given up more or less the better part of their lives to study of that subject. In almost any other phase of activity one would certainly select persons who had become expert in their particular fields to give advice, or to make selections, or to consider the whole question of dealing with this material in the best way and for the best purpose. It seems to me that the bill has no other object before it than that of doing for our historical material what is done for other forms of knowledge in fields perhaps more material, or what may be called "economic fields." For that reason many of us would feel that it is a matter of pride to the United States that the country should recognize this fact, that its historical material can be better dealt with by those who have given more or less of their lives to the study of it than by those who, perhaps, are interested in the subject, but who lack, perhaps, a certain amount of expert knowledge and a knowledge of its comparative importance or relative value from the standpoint of an expert and the method of presenting it.

I make the plea from that standpoint. The United States has not risen as yet to a very high level in the eyes of other countries in regard to questions of this kind. We are very backward in the matter of preserving our material, particularly so in regard to local and state systems and countries. We are perhaps the most backward government in the world in that respect. Our neglect and disregard of the material of our history is a matter of more or less notoriety. It is much better here as to materials in the possession of the National Government, and with a good many of those who are interested in history and in our history, and in the place that our history assumes among historical workers elsewhere, it is a matter of pride that we should take a position which would dignify us very much more, I think, than the position which we have taken in the past. This measure which is brought forward here is simply in the interest of the attainment by the country of a position of that character. It is a matter of pride and honor to this country to fall into line in that respect with other countries that have done much the same sort of thing in their own way, according to the conditions at hand, and we should stand very much better in the eyes of the world at large if we should do something similar, in conformity with the materials we have at hand and the conditions that prevail here.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Burke, do you wish to ask any questions?

Mr. BURKE. No; I think not.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Thomas?

Mr. THOMAS. No.

Mr. BURKE. Yes; I would like to ask one question. What, in your opinion, would be the advisability of asking a commission to serve without compensation or whether they should be compensated?

Professor ANDREWS. It is a very difficult question to answer. I should think, rather than have a measure like this fail, that the members who are interested in the matter would be perfectly willing to act or serve gratuitously, within certain limitations. I mean to say that when it came to the question of giving advice and meeting to consider the character of the publications to be done, it would act in

very much the same manner as does the historical manuscripts commission in England, which is a body of men holding dignified posts there, and which serves as an advisory body only, simply considering what ought to be done, and themselves doing nothing in the way of actual labor. Of course they serve without pay, but the real work is done by their group of three or four or five very carefully selected experts or clerks, as they are called there, by whom the work is done. I think if any actual work is done by members of the proposed commission, their services ought to be paid, but if it is merely to act as an advisory board it seems to me the question takes on a somewhat different character. Personally I think every man ought to be paid for what he does, even if he does it for the love of his subject. I think it is only a matter of fairness and reasonableness that he receive something for his labor. However, in this country the experts selected might perhaps be inclined to think that their work would be chiefly of an honorary and advisory nature, or that there was honor and distinction in what they are called on to do, and the matter of compensation might, perhaps, properly be fixed at a nominal figure, or so arranged as to cover their expenses, perhaps, as has been suggested.

Mr. BURKE. The men contemplated by this bill would be men of such pressing affairs that they would not be able to give very much of their time to the details of the work of the commission, would they, other than in an advisory capacity?

Professor ANDREWS. If their services were given even in an advisory capacity, it would mean that they would have to come together frequently and expend a considerable number of hours, say half a dozen or a dozen times a year, in talking over matters and plans and selecting materials and in discussing and giving advice, which would involve a considerable expenditure of time; and I think even then, in that case, some compensation should be offered. It would be relatively small.

Mr. THOMAS. How did I understand you? I did not quite catch that. In England and other countries is the compensation made to those who act in an advisory capacity?

Professor ANDREWS. No; in England, which I know best, the historical manuscripts commission, which in a certain sense corresponds to this here, although conditions in England are very different from those here—

Mr. THOMAS. Is the historical manuscripts commission in England paid?

Professor ANDREWS. No; that commission is made up of 13 men, most of them men of title and men of learning, particularly men of intellectual ability, who themselves are not paid; but those who serve under them are all paid. I mean men like Lord Rosebery, for example, who is on the commission. They act simply in an advisory capacity. Those who do the work of the commission are paid.

Mr. THOMAS. You mean those who do the clerical part of the work?

Professor ANDREWS. Those who prepare the actual reports are paid, and well paid.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there any other questions?

Mr. THOMAS. I have none.

The CHAIRMAN. That is all, Professor. Now, Mr. Putnam.

STATEMENT OF MR. HERBERT PUTNAM, LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS.

MR. PUTNAM. Mr. Chairman, I was not asked to come in support of this bill. I am here at your suggestion.

THE CHAIRMAN. That is right.

MR. PUTNAM. But I will also say that I have a keen interest, as Librarian of Congress, in the project in substance. The interest is one that should be shared by every establishment of the Government that has in its custody manuscript material of interest to the historical investigator. The need of some commission of experts to consider the material as yet unprinted, to report upon its character and value, to determine the method of publication and the order of publication is, I think, somewhat apparent from the fact that the Government has been spending for scores of years nearly \$170,000 a year, and yet this committee finds yet to be done the work indicated in this report [indicating same].

Nearly twenty-five years ago, in 1887, a commission was created by Congress to consider and report to Congress upon the character and value of the manuscript material in the possession of the Government having historical interest, and the method and policy that should be pursued with reference to the publication of it, or of any part of it. That commission was to consist of the Secretary of State, the Librarian of Congress, and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. So far as I am aware, it never met; certainly since I have been in office, nearly eleven years, I have had no intimation of any activity on its behalf. It is very natural that there should not have been any meeting, because it was composed of three heads of government establishments not in themselves expert in the subject-matter, and in any event dependent upon outside counsel for that portion of their report which should deal with the very questions upon which they were called upon to report.

Now, the Librarian of Congress, as I remarked, has a special interest in such a project as this; has had since 1903, when by a joint resolution Congress practically recognized it to be the main repository of that material in the possession of the Government which might have interest for the historical investigator. That resolution was an enabling resolution which authorized any executive department, bureau, any government establishment, in fact, to turn over to the Library of Congress material in its possession of historical interest no longer requisite for administrative purposes; and the result of that resolution has been, by subsequent executive order, to concentrate in the Library of Congress a considerable portion of such material; a considerable amount, I should say, not proportion, because vast bodies or accumulations still remain in the executive departments, as is indicated by this report.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I have recited this because, if not now, then a little later, should this bill be pursued, the question may arise as to the attitude toward the work of such a commission—as to the relations with it that would be sustained by the government establishments having custody of such material. I can only speak for ourselves. We have the custody of material of great importance, some of which we have undertaken already to see in print, other parts

of which, including, for instance, the Andrew Jackson papers, it is important should go into print; and, I wish to be perfectly explicit, that for the Library of Congress I see in such a commission an important, practically an indispensable, aid if only to guide it in the selection of material for publication and to sustain it in such publications as it may undertake. We should welcome extremely such a commission, and in general would feel that it would represent not merely increased efficiency, proper coordination due to a systematic plan, a selection or publication in the proper order of relative importance, but also a very great economy. Indeed, from the point of view of the Government as against that of the outsider, interested in the subject-matter merely, it seems to me that the resulting economy that would be secured by a systematic plan and the execution of it under a commission of experts—that economy may well be put to the front as the chief argument for such a commission.

MR. BURKE. What, in your opinion, would the estimated cost of carrying on this work under a commission be, Mr. Putnam?

MR. PUTNAM. I have not considered that at all, Mr. Burke. Of course there would be the minimum expense for the administration of the commission, the paid secretary, the clerical work, the traveling expenses of the commissioners. That would be the minimum. Then, of course, there would be the actual work of editing and preparing the material for publication and seeing it through the press. That would vary, of course, according to the undertaking.

MR. BURKE. In this statement of \$170,000 a year having been paid, has there been a considerable sum paid each year, or a large sum paid out in a few years, and then have we been running at less?

MR. PUTNAM. Doctor Jameson can tell us how far that estimate goes back. I think it runs back for nearly forty years, does it not?

DOCTOR JAMESON. Not so long. The tables given there (p. 7), as prepared by Mr. Ford from the reports of the printing investigation committee, run, I believe, from 1890 to 1907 or 1908, and the sum of \$159,000, as given there, is the average for those nineteen years.

THE CHAIRMAN. The Government had finished the publication of the war records in 1890 or 1893, I think.

DOCTOR JAMESON. A good deal of the expenditure there tabulated is for the war records.

THE CHAIRMAN. I thought they were mainly printed before 1893.

DOCTOR JAMESON. The publication began in 1881. In 1890 I do not believe it was half done.

THE CHAIRMAN. I was thinking that in 1893 the Records of the Confederate Armies had been printed in full.

MR. THOMAS. I think they were reprints.

DOCTOR JAMESON. The total given here for the whole period since 1890 is \$2,875,000, and the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion are set down as having cost \$1,881,000 of that. That would be, in round numbers, \$1,900,000 of war records and a million of other things, so that the average is \$159,000, including such expenditures upon the war records as came within the period since 1890.

THE CHAIRMAN. Then, aside from the war records, it would be something like \$60,000 a year?

DOCTOR JAMESON. Something between sixty and seventy thousand dollars.

MR. BURKE. I would like to ask Mr. Putnam as to the size of this commission, as to whether nine is a proper number, or whether it would be better to have a less number?

MR. PUTNAM. If the service were to be purely executive, I should on general principles think a smaller number preferable; but as it is to be very largely advisory, the ability to have represented on the commission the different points of view, the different specialties that may be involved, can, of course, be brought about only by a commission at least as large as nine. I think the fact that in this report itself this committee was able to draw into its service men who are experts in the naval records, men who are experts in the war records, men who had special knowledge of our diplomatic history, and so on; indicates a variety of experience and judgment that would be highly serviceable upon such a commission.

MR. BURKE. Your opinion, then, as I understand it, is that a commission as large as nine would necessarily have to be largely advisory?

MR. PUTNAM. No, sir. In order to have it completely advisory, to cover the field, nine members would be none too many; but with the expectation that when it came to the more executive part of its work there would be subdivisions within itself into small committees actually executive.

MR. BURKE. What have you to say as to the advisability of members of this commission being compensated or not?

MR. PUTNAM. I have not given that question any consideration at all, Mr. Burke.

MR. BURKE. I suppose, if such a commission was created, they would have to have an office in Washington. Would it be practicable for this commission to be located in the Library building, and could they be accommodated there?

MR. PUTNAM. We should certainly strain every effort to accommodate them, and I have no doubt that we should succeed.

MR. THOMAS. Mr. Putnam, the Library of Congress collects a large amount of historical material, does it not?

MR. PUTNAM. Yes. We have added to what had been in the Library when it was moved over from the Capitol much material from other governmental establishments, e. g. the manuscripts which have come to us from the State Department, including the papers of various Presidents and the papers of the Continental Congress, and a large mass of personal papers, including those of Andrew Jackson.

MR. THOMAS. My understanding was that you have been doing a large amount of work in that direction.

MR. PUTNAM. Yes.

MR. THOMAS. This commission would cooperate with the Librarian of Congress in the collection of historical material, would it?

MR. PUTNAM. In the collection of it?

MR. THOMAS. Yes; in the collection of it. It would be cooperative work, would it not?

MR. PUTNAM. It would be distinctively cooperative, from our point of view. The commission would consider the collections of the Library of Congress as one fraction of the governmental collections. It should take the governmental collections as a whole and consider the relative order of importance of the material in each with reference to the one grand scheme of publication. It would

be in that sense free from the excessive enthusiasm which the Library of Congress might have for certain of the materials in the Library, which the Secretary of State might have for certain material in his own archives in the State Department, and which the Secretary of War might have for certain material in the War Department. Under our recently existing system these enthusiasms may be brought to bear upon Congress without reference to one another; and they may not be correlated in any way, so that different governmental agencies may succeed—out of the same public Treasury—in promoting schemes of publication which, while perfectly suitable and meritorious in themselves, have no relation to a larger scheme, and do not recognize any relative importance as to subject-matter. As to this temptation we in the Library are in the same position as any department having government material in its custody.

Mr. THOMAS. This would aid you in the publication of a vast amount of material which the Library has now, and in getting more?

Mr. PUTNAM. Yes. The commission would consider not merely the material in the possession of the Government, but material in private hands; and I think that, incidentally, their investigations might result in bringing to the Library of Congress additional material.

Mr. THOMAS. Now, on the question of economy, would this commission aid you, or not aid you, to a certain extent in economizing expenditures in the collection of historical material, upon which you are now probably expending a considerable amount of money?

Mr. PUTNAM. Yes; I think it would. I thought of the economy as to the Government as a whole, rather than as to any one institution considered solely; but we should be benefited, undoubtedly. We should be saved considerable publication or the material in our possession might be so correlated with the material in other government establishments that there would necessarily be economy. Editorial work may be saved.

Mr. THOMAS. It would necessarily result in economy to the Government?

Mr. PUTNAM. I think so.

Mr. BURKE. The greatest saving would be that similar publications to those that may have been heretofore published would probably not be published if you had such a commission? For instance, there is \$1,881,000 expended for the publication of the Official Record of the War of the Rebellion. It seems to me that a commission would not probably recommend that so large a sum as that should be expended upon that publication. That is a mere matter of opinion, however.

Mr. PUTNAM. I suppose that some of the material that has gone into print would perhaps not have gone, or would not have gone into print at the time that it did, if such a commission were advising the Government. But I do not wish that remark to apply to that particular publication, which I think is of very great value.

Mr. THOMAS. I know it is a very valuable one. I know there is a vast amount of historical material in the States, and I should think there is a vast amount of historical material in the possession of the National Government.

The CHAIRMAN. Undoubtedly.

Mr. THOMAS. There has been recently an awakening, as was said this morning, as to the value of historical material. I know it is so in my own State of North Carolina.

Mr. PUTNAM. And also, Mr. Thomas, in nearly every State is there a similar recognition of this need by the creation of historical commissions. It is an anachronism that the Federal Government has not now a historical commission.

Mr. THOMAS. I had thought that we had already collected a large part of our historical material in North Carolina, but I find now that we have collected but a small part of it. The state historical society is now doing a very valuable work in that direction.

The CHAIRMAN. Would either of you ladies desire to say anything?

STATEMENT OF MISS RUTH PUTNAM, SPECIALIST IN DUTCH HISTORY, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Miss PUTNAM. We did not expect, Mr. Chairman, to have anything to say here, but we heartily indorse the idea that has been discussed here. We know the amount of waste work which has been done in all individual collections and all individual publications, and we know it is something that comes to the notice of every student, either small or great. It would seem to me that it is only the most rational thing in the world to bring into line all the publications that have to do with the Government and to properly proportion them.

As Mr. Putnam has just stated, in substance, any one person naturally overestimates the very small circle in which he or she is working. It is impossible, if you are attached to your idea, not to feel the importance of that idea; and it seems to me that a commission over and above all the small and local specialists is the most important thing for the Government. I came here only by chance, and I am extremely interested in this discussion as a representative of a large class of what I may call "browsing historians," and I think it is a most important and most economical thing to do, to put all this work into proper proportion and to provide expert judgment and direction to the material which the Government ought to collect and publish.

The CHAIRMAN. There is a letter from Mr. Albert Bushnell Hart, president of the American Historical Association, which can be printed.

Following is the letter referred to:

OFFICE OF PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION,

Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., January 3, 1910.

HON. SAMUEL W. McCALL,

House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. McCALL: As one of your constituents, and at the same time as a member of the committee on documentary historical publications of the United States Government, I beg to ask the special attention of the Library Committee to the bill (H. R. 15428) now pending in Congress for the appointment of a commission on national historical publications.

The reason for an appointment of the committee (whose report has led up to the bill) was the conviction of a great many people who use the sources of the history of the United States, that the government publications on that subject are very incomplete. The Government has published large quantities of material of an historical nature—most of it valuable; but it is so disconnected, and in many cases so incomplete, that there are great gaps. Further—

more some of the government sets are not conveniently arranged or indexed, because made up by persons who were not acquainted with the devices for bringing out the material, and making it available. Considering the significance of the United States in history, the rich materials existing in the government archives, the importance to scholars of opening up the unprinted documents and of rearranging and reissuing some of the printed series which have now become so rare that they can hardly be found at all, has not the time arrived for the Government to authorize a systematic group of publications? Such a measure is necessary in the interests of economy. At present the historical publications of the Government are issued by various departments in various scales, out of different appropriations; there are some duplications, and it is not the business of anybody to consider what is the most important work to take up next.

I am convinced now, as I was during the discussions of the committee, that the only practicable way to make the historical publications accord in extent and thoroughness with the dignity of the Government is to place that function in the hands of one commission. This would not in any way interfere with publications made by the departments for departmental purposes—such as the *Treaties*, *Moore's Digest of International Law*, the collection of Indian treaties, etc.; nor does it interfere with the special publications of the Library of Congress. I believe that a commission of experts—of whom some would naturally be connected with the public service—is better fitted to deal with such a function than any individual or inter-departmental committee or commission.

Such a commission, however, would be of very little service unless it had positive powers. The experience of review commissions throughout the country is unfortunate. Most of the municipal art commissions, for example, which have power to pass on designs for monuments and public structures accomplish very little, except an occasional scrimmage. The experience of the board of editors of the *American Historical Association*, which for fifteen years has carried on a periodical of national scope, shows that such a commission may be expected to work harmoniously and effectively; and the relations between the *American Historical Association*, which has a charter from the Government and for twenty years has had its report printed by the Government, through the Smithsonian Institution, proves that a body of learned men outside the public service can act in harmony with the officials of the Government.

I heartily hope that the bill will go through substantially as drafted. Any change which took away the positive and responsible character of the commission would, in my judgment, prevent its carrying out the purpose for which it is proposed.

With highest respect, I have the honor to be,

Yours, very truly,

ALBERT BUSHNELL HART.

Mr. ADAMS. Mr. Chairman, I would merely like to say that I do not think there is any real difference between Admiral Mahan and myself. The point that was raised was perfectly covered by Mr. Putnam, or the gentleman who preceded him, when he drew the distinction between the advisory and the executive features of the work. The advisory, in my opinion, should not be paid. Right there the line is drawn, and I think it is a great mistake to fix what must be a very small compensation to an advisory commission, and it makes it a temptation for very inferior men who desire to get on it.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT OF PROF. CHARLES M. ANDREWS.

Professor ANDREWS. Mr. Chairman, I would like to say in regard to the Historical Manuscripts Association in England, to prevent possible misunderstanding, that the thirteen members who constitute that commission are very largely honorary members, who do no work at all. But the fact that that commission is made up so largely of men who represent the nobility and the more honorable classes of England is due to the necessity not only of having a very dignified body, but also to the necessity of obtaining for the commission from

the families of England or of Great Britain the material which it is the object of the commission to get and to bring pressure to bear upon those families in order to get them to allow the transmission of that material from their own houses to the record office. The policy of having a master of the rolls or a dozen lords on that commission is a matter of great importance in that regard. I would say that the thirteen members have practically nothing to do except to act in that honorary capacity. The practical work of advice, even, is performed only by one or two of them, and in the main the recommendations are made largely by those who are subordinate, and those recommendations emanate largely from the public record office itself, so that I do not think there is any analogy between that English system and the system that would exist here.

THE CHAIRMAN. They are appointed there largely because of their influence and information?

PROFESSOR ANDREWS. Yes; and because of the English practice to put men of dignity and honor on public bodies merely to give a certain "front," which pleases the Englishmen as a whole.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT OF DR. J. FRANKLIN JAMESON.

DOCTOR JAMESON. Mr. Chairman, if I might I should like to speak of one additional matter, a matter concerning which Doctor Colenbrander spoke to me in the car when we were coming up here; and when I spoke before I was not aware that he would not dwell upon it. The matter of the relations of such a commission to existing agencies in the Government, which also publish historical material, has been spoken of once or twice. My view had been that if such a commission was created, a commission with initiative, and if it started a good series of publications paid for out of appropriations of its own, the effect of that would be that, without statutory prohibition, existing agencies, departments, and so forth, which have published historical materials heretofore, would presently, before long, come into the habit of looking to such a commission to take charge of the historical publications which they believed to be expedient, rather than do them themselves.

In the report of the committee a somewhat elaborate scheme of cooperation between this commission or subcommittees of it and the departments is outlined, not put in the draft of the bill, but added at the end of our report because it seemed too much a matter of detail. There is, of course, at the start of a new commission something invidious in giving it powers over, or any opportunity of repression upon, institutions of government that have been in the habit of generating and carrying forward their own publications. But Doctor Colenbrander tells me that in the Dutch system precisely what I have suggested above has taken place. There is no statutory prohibition on the ministries which prevents them from going forward and generating still further historical publications in the future, as they have been in the habit of doing in the past, but as a matter of practice, after a few years of the existence of the royal commission on governmental historical publications, the ministers have practically ceased to publish anything of that sort independently, but turn over all such ideas and projects and the execution of them to this commission.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT OF DR. H. T. COLENBRANDER.

DOCTOR COLENBRANDER. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask permission to speak a few words in regard to statements that have been made since I spoke before you a little while ago. One is as to conditions of pay for different sorts of work in connection with such an undertaking. With us the membership of the commission itself is not paid, and it is considered as a matter of honor to serve on that commission. But the secretary is paid, and well paid, and it has been our experience that one ought to do so. The duty of the secretary of a commission like this, even in such a small country as Holland, involves so much labor that he should be liberally compensated, the same as in other scientific employments. The actual work in connection with the publication of documents is either not paid for or paid for, according to circumstances. It often happens that a thoroughly well-fitted person offers himself to do things without pay. Other cases occur in which a small compensation is necessary to obtain the disposal of the time of somebody. A third case, which often occurs, and which we are providing for just now, is to pay a man absolutely for putting himself at the entire disposal of the commission in undertaking work of such dimensions as can not be paid for by mere wages. Thus it occurs that a man is absolutely paid for some years for such a time as he may be serving in that work.

As to the number of our commission, our act of institution says that the number should not be less than seven. As a matter of fact, there are ten, and should be, because the amount of labor and studies to be divided among them is so great that even if you have a number such as four or five of the most competent persons they will not happen to be sufficiently competent on all the subjects that come before them, so that it has become desirable to take in a larger number of people. It has no appreciable effect on the cost of the thing, because the only expenses that are paid are the traveling expenses. That is the situation in our country.

(Thereupon, at 11.45 o'clock a. m., the committee adjourned.)

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
Washington, January 6, 1910.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As I was the only spokesman at the hearing yesterday representing an establishment of the Government, it may not be superfluous if I add to my testimony this summary of the reasons why such a commission as is proposed should be welcomed in the interest of the Government itself. These reasons sufficiently appear in the aid which it would afford to the Library of Congress, in particular in these respects:

1. In the case of publications to be undertaken by the library (as to which its service would be merely advisory), it would give expert aid in the selection of the group of material and in the elimination from this group of irrelevant or unimportant matter, and it would advise as to scope, method, and form.

2. Where the commission was not merely to advise, but itself to edit and publish, it would relieve the library not merely of the decision upon all of the above questions, but of the preparation of the material for publication, the editorial work, and the supervision through the press.

This relief would be most welcome, for the library, being a library, its staff is and should be primarily engaged with the acquisition of material, its classification, cataloguing, administration, and exhibit in lists and calendars. It has no appropriation for editorial work as such. Any labor devoted to it has meant either diversion of officials from administrative work during library hours or overtime work in unofficial hours. For the publications (of manuscript ma-

terial) which it has undertaken, it has had competent experts in Mr. Worthington Ford and his successor, Mr. Gaillard Hunt. It can not expect to be equally fortunate with regard to every field or period to which its material may relate.

3. If the above considerations apply to it, a library, they would seem to apply with even greater force and in greater dimension to any executive department of the Government.

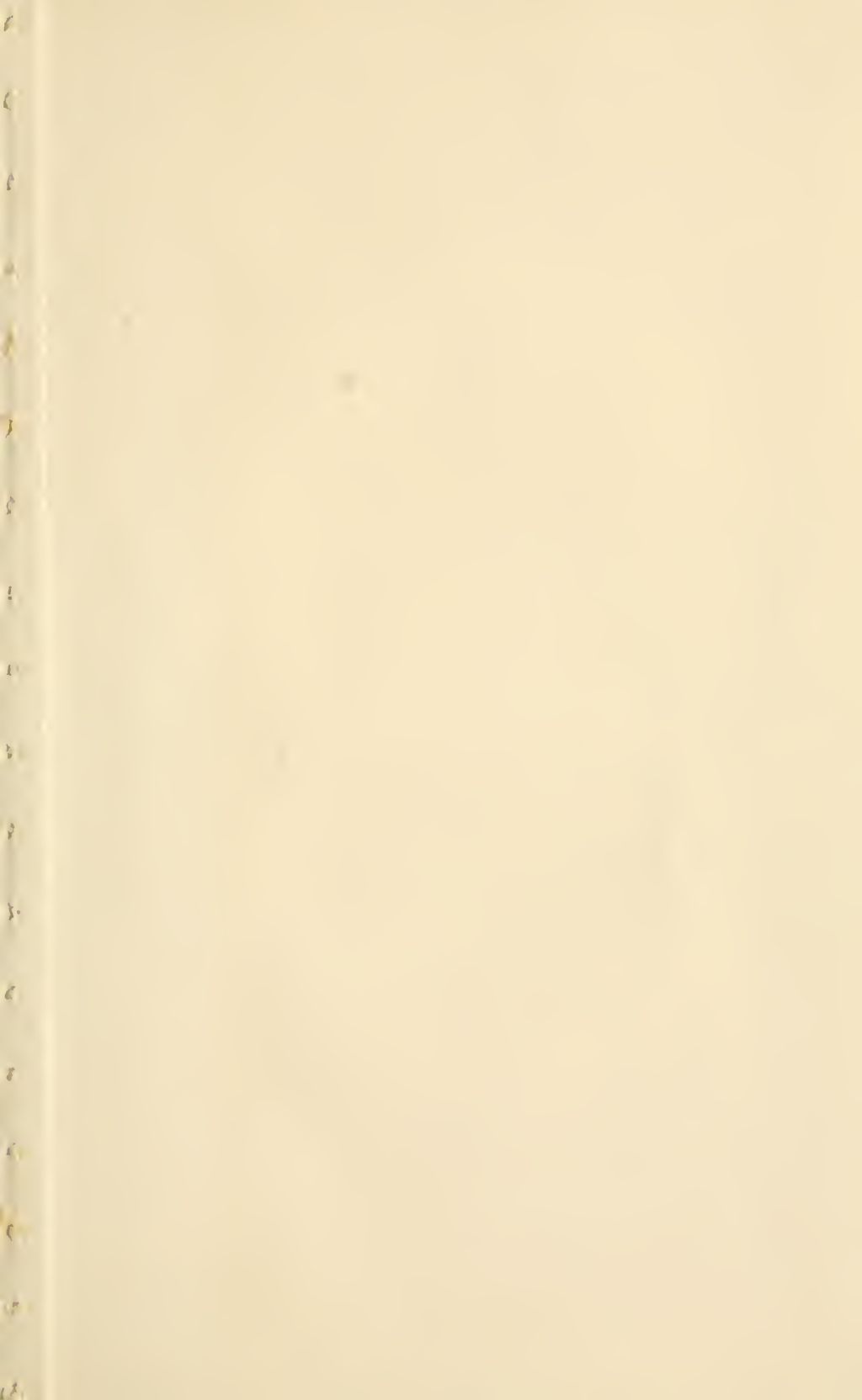
4. Even granting within the library or any such department ability to select, to edit, and to publish material useful in itself, there is no assurance that the selection would be that required by a larger expediency, viewing the collections of the Government as a whole, nor that in form and method any particular publication would be correlated with others similar in nature.

Proper coordination, proper correlation, scientific selection, expert editorship, and uniformity, with all the resultant efficiencies and economics, can be secured in only one way—by the concentration of the responsibility and the direction in a central body or commission of experts such as is proposed.

Very respectfully,

HERBERT PUTNAM,
Librarian of Congress.

Hon. S. W. McCall,
*Chairman Committee on the Library,
House of Representatives, Washington.*



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